UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

1 - Belmont
1 - Rosen
1 - DeLoach

TO W. C. Sullivan

DATE: 5-1-64

FROM W. A. Branigan

1 - Conrad
1 - Sullivan
1 - Malley
1 - Branigan
1 - Lenihan
1 - Gheesling

SUBJECT: LEE HARVEY OSWALD
INTERNAL SECURITY - RUSSIA - CUBA

SECRET

The President's Commission has indicated the necessity for making public the FBI investigative reports which have been furnished to the Commission and which detailed our investigation of Oswald prior to the assassination. The Commission pointed out that these reports made a powerful case for the FBI in that they reveal nothing was uncovered during that investigation to indicate the capability of Oswald to assassinate the President.

These reports and letters are as follows:

(1) Report of Special Agent John W. Fain dated 5-12-60 at Dallas captioned "Funds Transmitted to Residents of Russia, IS - R." This report was classified "Confidential" as it disclosed the FBI's investigative interest in persons in the U. S. who transmitted funds to residents of Russia. Declassification of this report at this time would not seriously jeopardize the Bureau's interest and this report contains no information which would result in embarrassment to the Bureau if it is made public.

(2) Bureau letter to Office of Security, State Department dated 6-3-60. This letter referred to a State Department Foreign Service Dispatch concerning Oswald's renunciation of his American citizenship at the U. S. Embassy, Moscow, and requested the State Department to furnish any current information State possessed concerning Oswald. There are no objections to publicizing information contained in this letter.

(3) Bureau letter to Office of Security, State Department, dated 2-27-61, captioned "Lee Harvey Oswald, IS - R." This letter advised State that information had been received from the Office of Naval Intelligence that Oswald had been given an undesirable discharge from the U. S. Marine Corps Reserve and requested any additional information contained in the files of State Department be furnished to the Bureau. There are no objections to publicizing information contained in this letter.

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ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED EXCEPT WHERE SHOWN OTHERWISE

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(4) Report of Special Agent John W. Fain dated 7-3-61 at Dallas captioned "Lee Harvey Oswald, IS - R." This report was classified "Confidential" in order to protect our Legat operations as it contains information obtained from the Swiss Federal Police (concealed by T symbol) by Legat, Paris, and because it referred to information obtained from two Dallas confidential informants. This report was declassified at the time it was previously furnished to the Commission as disclosure of information in this report would not jeopardize Bureau operations or adversely affect Bureau's informant coverage. Page nine of this report contains information from Mrs. James E. Taylor, 4936 Collingwood Street, Fort Worth, Texas, a former neighbor of subject, to the effect that Mrs. Marguerite Oswald, subject's mother, was in poor health and extremely nervous and that she often quarreled very loudly with both subject and his brother, Robert. Although Mrs. Taylor at the time she furnished this information on 6-28-61 did not request her identity be concealed, she might object to this information being made public. This report contains no other information to prevent its being made public.

This is merely your assumption. H

(5) Report of Special Agent John W. Fain dated 7-10-62 at Dallas captioned "Lee Harvey Oswald, IS - R." This report was classified "Confidential" as it contains information from Navy which is so classified. That information concerned Oswald's having been given an undesirable discharge. Since this information is now public knowledge, this report was declassified at the time it was previously made available to the Commission. This report contains results of our several reviews of State Department records as well as information obtained from other U. S. Government agencies' records and results of our first interview with Oswald. There would not appear to be any objections to this report being made public.

(6) Report of Special Agent John W. Fain dated 8-30-62 at Dallas captioned "Lee Harvey Oswald, IS - R." This report was classified "Confidential" as it contained results of our contact with two confidential informants familiar with Communist Party activities at Fort Worth concerning subject. This report was declassified at the time it was previously furnished to the Commission as disclosure of its contents would not adversely affect Bureau's informant coverage. This report contains results of our reinterview with subject and background data concerning Marina Oswald as obtained from Immigration and Naturalization Service records. There would be no objections to this report being made public.

(7) Report of Special Agent James P. Hosty, Jr., dated 9-10-63 at Dallas captioned "Lee Harvey Oswald, IS - R." This report revealed information that subject was a subscriber to "The Worker," an East Coast communist newspaper, and that on 4-21-63 subject was in contact with the Fair Play for Cuba Committee (FPCC) in New York.

Although this latter information was obtained from an anonymous source, the information is paraphrased in such a manner that this source is protected. Attached to this report is a current Bureau approved documentation of the FPCC, the accuracy of which has been verified by the New York Office. There would be no objections to this report being made public.

(8) Report of SA Warren C. De Brueys dated 10-25-63 at New Orleans captioned "Fair Play for Cuba Committee - New Orleans Division, IS - Cuba; RA - Cuba." This report contains a current documentation for the FPCC, Emergency Civil Liberties Committee, and for Corliss Lamont. New York has verified the accuracy of these documentations. No objections to making public.

(9) Report of SA Milton R. Kaack dated 10-31-63 at New Orleans captioned "Lee Harvey Oswald, IS - R." This report was classified "Confidential" as it contained security information from current informants. This report was declassified at the time it was previously furnished to the Commission, as disclosure of its contents would not adversely affect the Bureau's informant coverage. Page three of this report contained information from an anonymous source, however, public disclosure of this information would not jeopardize that source since this information could have come from a live informant. This report also contained current documentations for the FPCC, the Emergency Civil Liberties Committee, and for Corliss Lamont, all three of which New York has verified as to their accuracy.

(10) The Commission referred to the report of SA James R. Hosty, Jr., dated 12-11-63 at Dallas captioned "Ruth Hyde Paine" as containing additional investigation conducted by the Bureau concerning Oswald immediately prior to the assassination, consisting of interviews with Mrs. Paine. The Commission noted that this information is duplicated in the report of SA Warren C. De Brueys dated 12-2-63, Dallas. The Commission expressed the desire to make public Hosty's report of 12-11-63 rather than De Brueys' report of 12-2-63, in view of the tremendous volume of the latter report (737 pages) most of which consists of information developed subsequent to the assassination. Public disclosure of Hosty's report dated 12-11-63 could create some real problems for the Bureau. For example, page three contains information from Mrs. Paine's brother, Dr. Carl D. Hyde, to the effect that Ruth Paine was experiencing marital difficulties. Page four contains information from Dr. Hyde that all members of his family, including himself, were "tolerant of others' point of view" and explained by this he meant that, should a person make it known

that he is a communist and not engaged in subversion, they would not feel duty-bound to advise authorities of this person's views. Included in this report and covered by a T symbol was information furnished by the Columbus Regional Office, 109th Counterintelligence Corps, in December, 1952, that Mrs. Carol Hyde, Mrs. Paine's mother, had admitted to neighbors that she was a communist. No further clarification of that statement is contained in this report, however during an SGE investigation of Sylvia Hoke, sister of Ruth Paine, in 1956 - 1957, no information was developed to verify that Mrs. Carol Hyde was a communist. Some persons interviewed reported that Mrs. Carol Hyde was suffering from a mental ailment. Reports concerning Sylvia Hoke have been furnished to the Commission. SA Hosty's report of 12-11-63 also includes a statement from a Mrs. Joan Barker, a neighbor of Mrs. Carol Hyde, that in 1960 Carol Hyde had been committed to a sanitarium as a mental patient by her ex-husband. We have not verified that Mrs. Hyde was, in fact, committed. Page nine of this report reveals that in 1953 we conducted a Conscientious Objector investigation concerning Carl D. Hyde. This report shows that he based his objections to military service on religious convictions and beliefs. Although this report does not reveal results of that Conscientious Objector investigation the Bureau's file in that matter disclosed that persons interviewed expressed the belief that Carl D. Hyde's objections to military service were legitimate. The reports prepared during that investigation have been furnished to the Commission. This report also contains a documentation of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. That documentation disclosed that on 5-8-40 information was received that this organization was suspected of being a communist front organization. The most recent information contained in that documentation is dated 5-16-57 from another informant to the effect that, while the Communist Party in Cincinnati had expressed an interest in this organization, that interest did not exist at that time and that the Communist Party was making no attempts to infiltrate or control that organization.

[redacted]

(12) The Commission also requested clearance to make available to the public the following reports and Bureau communications:

(a) Reports of SA John R. Wineberg dated 12-10-63 and 2-12-64 at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. These reports set forth results of our interviews with Joseph Goulden, reporter "Philadelphia Inquirer" newspaper concerning a story Goulden reported in his newspaper inferring that FBI had approached Oswald to be informant. Goulden refused to disclose his source for such scurrilous allegation and denied that he had furnished any information along such line to Lonnie Hudkins, reporter for the Houston "Post" who also reported in his newspaper a story indicating FBI had contacted Oswald to become informant. There is no objection making either of these reports public.

(b) This is a letter to the Commission from the Bureau dated 2-11-64 setting forth results of interview with Lonnie Hudkins concerning an article Hudkins reported in the Houston "Post" 1-1-64 entitled "Oswald Rumored as Informant for U. S." Hudkins indicated his story was based on information he received from Assistant District Attorney

William Alexander in Dallas. He refused to name another source who allegedly indicated Oswald was on payroll of either FBI or Central Intelligence Agency. Hudkins stated that even if he were called to appear before the President's Commission, he would decline to furnish source of his information. Hudkins also claimed to have received information from Joe Golden, a reporter for the "Philadelphia Inquirer," to the effect that Golden indicated Oswald was a symbol number informant. There is no objection to having results of our interview with Hudkins put in the public record.

(c) This is a letter to the Commission from the Bureau dated 2-13-64 reporting that we had interviewed Joseph Goulden of the "Philadelphia Inquirer" and that Goulden denied furnishing any information to Hudkins to the effect that Oswald was an FBI informant. There is no objection to making this letter public.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

We are now approaching the very delicate and crucial stage in the Commission's analysis of the Oswald case. It goes without saying that we must weigh with extreme care every request now made of us by this Commission. This memorandum has been prepared because the Commission has indicated the necessity of making public the FBI investigative reports which have been furnished the Commission and which detailed our investigation of Oswald prior to the assassination.

It is definitely not in the Bureau's interest to have these investigative reports made public as they are raw material and not prepared for public examination. We will remember the flood of comment, speculation, etc., following the publication in the court records of some of our reports in the Judith Coplon case which likewise were not prepared for public consumption. These reports do tend to reveal some of our investigative techniques and will reveal information furnished to our Agents which, although not stated to be furnished in confidence, would probably not have been furnished if the person interviewed thought the information would be made public. Examples of this are statements regarding Mrs. Marguerite Oswald, the marital difficulties of Ruth Paine, Mrs. Paine's mother admitting she was a communist, Mrs. Carol Hyde suffering from a mental ailment, etc. The publication of the WFO airtel of 11-19-63, in light of the current Congressional interest in mail covers, could well result in criticism of the Post Office Department and the loss of Post Office Department cooperation in highly delicate investigative techniques.

I don't share your concern about these matters.

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Despite the above, it is recommended that Mr. Belmont and Mr. Malley advise Mr. Rankin that as previously stated we have no desire to restrict the activities of the Commission in any way and the decision as to whether these documents are introduced in the record is the decision for the Commission to make. At the same time we will point out, as indicated above, the criticism that can arise some of which, of course, will be directed to the Commission and the Commission should be prepared to stand up to this. With reference to the WFO airtel of 11-19-63 we should frankly point out that this will cause real investigative problems and explore whether this cannot be handled in another way, such as the introduction of the letter itself as furnished by the Soviet Embassy following the assassination.

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